

Meeting Minutes
Grand Valley Selenium Task Force
April 21, 2005

Attendees: Sonja R. Chavez de Baca (Coordinator), Rick Krueger (USFWS), Glen Miller, John Butler (Mesa Land Trust, Mesa Conservation District), Paul von Guerard (USGS), Mike Baker (USBOR), Dave Kanzer (CRWCD)

I. Coordinator's Updates

- A/B. Letters to Congressional Staffers and Salton Sea Advisory Committee - Letters will be written (thanking them and highlighting how they can help us meet our goals) and reviewed by the Task Force.
- C. Budget Status - waiting for numbers from Cindy Lueb (Mesa State)
- D. CWA Dues - Mesa County paying \$50 membership fee for the Task Forces for 2005/2006.
- E. Website: The GVSTF has agreed to share the financial cost of the Selenium Task Force website with the GBSTF. Sonja is asking for financial assistance from members to help pay for the 3 year website hosting and domain name registration (\$98). There was no pledge for support. Sonja will get an email out to the rest of the Task Force.
- F. Revisiting Water Quality Trading?: Ronda Sandquist emailed Sonja to suggest that the Task Force revisit the water quality trading concept and extend it the entire length of the Colorado River. The Task Forces response was to put a summary proposal of their ideas into writing (highlighting how the proposal helps the task force meet its goal) and then submit to the TF for review. The TF will then decide whether they want to hear a full presentation.
- G. June Joint Meeting Agenda:

Coordinator asked the TF for input on agenda items for the June Joint Meeting of the Grand Valley and Gunnison Basin Selenium Task Forces.

- A. Rick Krueger mentioned that two studies were being done by USFWS under the direction of Barb Osmundson and that it would make a very interesting presentation. Barb's studies include:
 - 1. Grow Out Ponds to look at the effects of different water quality (ponds leased by USFWS have different water sources and concentrations of selenium) on Razorback Suckers.
 - 2. Barb is also doing a study which looks at whole body, egg, and muscle plug tissue differences in selenium among different fish species to look at the effect levels. This study/data may be very important in addressing: What tissues should you collect? What species should you test?

(Coordinator's Note: Barb has accepted our invitation to present outlines of her studies and their importance.)

Tad Foster: have Tad Foster give us an update on comments given to the EPA via phone conference or in person.

Could also invite the Salton Sea people to come if they are interested. If we do invite them we might want to include in tour some of the remediation demo sites.

Ask NRCS if we can use their meeting space (Paul will ask Jim Currier today when he sees them). (Coordinator Update: A conference room at NRCS has been reserved).

- II. Tributaries Report (Mike Baker) (See handout) – ask Mike to send an e-copy of the draft report. Mike is looking to hear from the group on whether the concepts adequately cover what’s needed for this level of planning. Outside of 1-5 are their other concepts that should be explored? Alternatives that meet the water quality standards of the tribs.

Dave Kanzer felt that there are different levels of work within the measures in a single alternative and future work that we might be able to do. Mike agreed and said that we can discuss this within the framework of the roadmap for the tribs and Mike also agreed to follow up with a “next steps” document under the GV TATS planning assistance. Dave also thought that it would be important to include a cost estimate to further refine what we mean when we say that something is financially “infeasible.” Mike can put a ball park number (i.e. billion dollars to do X). Mike thinks he can come up with very rough figures for us so that we have something to relate to in terms of feasibility.

Glenn Miller felt that the TF needs to continue to look at the concentration of selenium through treatment. The TF reminder Glenn that Golder Associates is exploring this alternative and has a proposal in to EPA with the TF’s blessing.

The City of Grand Junction and Mesa County also sent Mike comments via email which he has addressed.

Specific Discussion on Alternative II in the report:

Members of the TF felt that wetland treatment cells may have a role especially when we talk about finishing cells in the Golder proposal. Mike agreed and said they could provide minor contributions, but were discarded as major alternatives.

Dan Beley noted that the terminology used in the report for “drains” could cause some confusion for the State Water Quality Control Commissioners (State: drains – man made; BOR/TF: drains – natural). Mike is going to continue to use, but will add a statement that clarifies the definition of drains for the WQ Commission.

Clarification: According to BOR it would cost approximately 6.3 million to address Adobe Creek (Adobe Cr. is about the average length of the 12 drains BOR has data on), therefore addressing all drains would roughly cost \$76 million dollars.

CDOW will likely oppose having riparian areas and water quality habitat dried up 6 months out of the year. Mike is hoping to receive feedback from Lori Martin (CDOW) on draft report. TF wondered if there were any other users of the water (besides fish) that would be impacted by a 6 month dry up?

Specific Discussion of Alternative IV (variation of alternative 1 with dilution water and treatment added).

Would need treatment plant and then reservoir to provide water for treatment. Combination of direct diversion and storage of between 100K to 300K acre feet. This alternative doesn't dry up the drain (with the exception of some sections where the treatment plants are). No diffuser required. There would also be decreasing loads and concentrations. Disadvantages/unknowns: we don't know if this alternative would be cost effective. Could possibly require another canal or enlargement to carry additional dilution water.

Specific Discussion of Alternative V (Alternative II with treatment plants): Objective is to not dry up habitat. No diffuser, less habitat loss, reduction in loading and concentrations.

TF had one other alternative: leave stream flowing upstream from 100-year floodplain, do use attainability, take whole flow of Adobe Creek and pipe to river. Takes care of regulatory issue with ESA and keeps water in the stream for native fish.

LUNCH BREAK

If we say that there really isn't anything "reasonable" that we could do to meet water quality standard then do we go forward trying to mitigate. This brings us to middle diamond on roadmap. We are asking "Are there reasonable measures that could reduce concentrations and improve habitat in specific reaches for aquatic life (MITIGATION)?"

Mike's proposed sequel to study: 1. Options to mitigate Se, and 2.) Study related to impacts in GV tribs.

By next month, Mike needs a decision from Task Force on what to do with remaining funds after he completes tribs report and helps Paul with land use study. This will again be an agenda item at the next TF meeting in May.

In terms of leveraging funds: Mike will check to see if the State Conservation District Parallel funds can be used as match for the CIG grant (Coordinator Update: No, parallel funds are considered federal dollars).

Coordinator's Note: Get an email out to everyone regarding doing one meeting in Grand Junction next month? TF needs to improve membership attendance so that we can continue to make progress and most efficient use of our time at meetings.

Adjourn 3pm.